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July 27, 2015

Jeff S. Jordon, Esq. Assistant General Counsel Federal Election Commission 999 E Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20463

Re:

MUR 6938 - Peter Schweizer

Dear Mr. Jordan:

We are submitting this letter and the annexed affidavit in response to the complaint filed by the American Democracy Legal Fund, hereinafter denominated MUR 6938 or Complaint. The Complaint alleges that Peter Schweizer, the author of *Clinton Cash* (the "Book"), published by HarperCollins Publishers LLC ("HarperCollins"), violated 11 C.F.R. §110 1(b), and more generally the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended ("FECA"), under the theory that when Mr. Schweizer briefed Senator Rand Paul regarding the Book's contents prior to its formal release, Mr. Schweizer made an excessive campaign contribution. The Complaint is a blatant attempt to use the Federal Election Commission as a bludgeon against the First Amendment rights of Mr. Schweizer through dubious claims, which simply do not constitute a cognizable violation of FECA.

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Background

Mr. Schweizer is an accomplished author, journalist and researcher who has previously written about government waste, inefficiency, and potential illegality. He is the author of Extortion: How Politicians Extract Your Money, Buy Votes, and Line Their Own Pockets (2013), and Throw Them All Out: How Politicians and Their Friends Get Rich Off Insider Stock Tips, Land Deals, and Cronyism That Would Send the Rest of Us to Prison (2011), each of which was a New York Times best-seller that led to featured stories on 60 Minutes. Exhibit 1. Indeed, the later book detailed insider trading by members of Congress and led directly to the passage of the Stock Act, which mandated timely disclosure of all stock holdings and financial transactions by members of Congress. Mr. Schweizer has also written over ten other published works of fiction and non-fiction. Moreover, Mr. Schweizer has written articles and appeared on news and other shows, as a commentator, including multiple appearances on 60 Minutes. He has also served as a consultant to the White House Office of Presidential Speechwriting and as a consultant to NBC News. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from George Washington University and received a Master of Philosophy from Oxford University. Exhibit 1

Curtin, Stacy. "Obama Signs STOCK Act Prohibiting Congressional Insider Trading. But there's More to Be Done: Peter Schweizer." Yahoo Finance. 4 April 2012. Web. 2 July 2015. .

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The absence of candidates obviates the Complaint

The Complaint opens its legal argument by stating, "Federal law prohibits individuals from making a contribution in the aggregate in excess of more than \$2,700 to a candidate for federal office per election." (emphasis added). Of course, all parties are in total agreement with this statement of law, which is fully applicable to a candidate, which Mr. Paul was not on March 25, 2015, the date Mr. Schweizer discussed the Book, Exhibit 1. Mr. Paul became a candidate for President of the United States on April 7, 2015. Exhibit 2. The Complaint continues its legal argument by stating, "By giving Senator Paul access to the content of Clinton Cash before it was released to the general public, Schweizer and HarperCollins gave Senator Paul something of value in the form of information for him to use in his campaign against Secretary Clinton." However, as noted, Mr. Paul was not a candidate competing for the same federal office as Mrs. Clinton, indeed, Mrs. Clinton was not a candidate for any federal office at the time, rather she was a private citizen. Mrs. Clinton became a candidate for President of the United States on April 13, 2015. Exhibit 3. Therefore, since neither was a candidate at the time Mr. Paul and Mr. Schweizer spoke, there could not possibly have been a campaign contribution regarding a presidential election in which neither person allegedly impacted by this alleged contribution was a participant.

Rather, as indicated in Exhibit 1, Mr. Schweizer was aware that Senator Paul was a member of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Chairman of the United

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Sates Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Operation and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women's Issues. In his role on both committees Senator Paul had a keen interest, and a duty, to pursue information which could indicate the former United States Secretary of State had engaged in unethical or illegal acts that compromised the best interests of the United States. For example, Mr. Schweizer wrote about Secretary Clinton's failure to disclose large contributions her family's foundation took from foreign governments, and Secretary Clinton's approval of a deal that gave the Russian State Atomic Nuclear Agency ("Rosatom") a controlling stake in an American Uranium mining company, Uranium One.² Each matter properly cognizable by the Senate Committee Mr. Paul served.

In late March of 2015, Mr. Schweizer was invited to meet with Senator Paul in his Senate Office to talk about the Book, including Mrs. Clinton's activities while serving as Secretary of State. The meeting with Senator Paul took place on March 25, 2015, in a Senate office, at which time they discussed Mr. Schweizer's research. Exhibit 1. At no time did they discuss the 2016 elections, Senator Paul's plans for 2016, or Mrs. Clinton's possible participation in a campaign. Exhibit 1. Indeed, predicated on the information Mr. Schweizer shared with Senator Paul, the Senator suggested he meet with Senator Robert Corker, the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and his staff helped arrange a meeting for Mr. Schweizer and Senator

² Breitbart News. "11 Explosive Clinton Cash Facts Mainstream Media Confirm are Accurate." Breitbart News. 26 April 2015. Web. 2 July 2015. http://www.breitbart.com/big-government/2015/04/26/11-explosive-clinton-cash-facts-mainstream-media-confirm-are-accurate/>.

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Corker on March 27th, a scant two days later. This second meeting was similar to the first, in that it occurred in a Senate office, the discussion was about issues of interest to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and it had nothing to do with the 2016 presidential campaign. Chairman Corker had several staff attend the meeting, but Senator Paul did not attend. Exhibit 1.

Mr. Schweizer did not advise HarperCollins of these meetings, or seek approval for them as he viewed the meetings as his duty as a United States citizen to share information of possible malfeasance by a high ranking government official with the appropriate government entity, rather than as a marketing endeavor for the Book. Exhibit 1. Any discussions Mr. Schweizer had with Senators Paul and Corker could not have been a campaign contribution related to the 2016 presidential elections because neither of the Senators, or Mrs. Clinton, was a candidate at the time of the meetings. Nor could the meetings in some magical way be converted into campaign contributions funded in whole or in part by a corporation, namely HarperCollins, because HarperCollins neither funded the meetings nor had knowledge of the meetings. To view these meetings in any other way would undermine the ability of the legislative and executive branches to function by making any "non-public information", including information otherwise marketable as research or teaching material, or a possible publication into a valuable campaign contribution when shared with a government official. That would in turn thrust the Federal Election Commission into the business of investigating the government's efforts to gather information whenever a candidate or potential candidate received such information.

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In the alternative, Mr. Schweizer was a volunteer

Even if you reject the logic and clear legal basis for finding that Mr. Schweizer did not make a campaign contribution when he spoke to Senator Paul, then you must consider Mr. Schweizer's conversation with the Senator, for which he was not compensated, as the act of a volunteer. Clearly, Mr. Schweizer met with Senator Paul without being compensated and with intent to voluntarily share information with him. It is blackletter law that a person may volunteer their services to a candidate or political party, "The value of services provided without compensation by any individual who volunteers on behalf of a candidate or political committee is not a contribution." 11 C.F.R. §100.74 Our research did not reveal a single prosecution of a volunteer sharing information with a candidate regarding his or her expertise or talent, be that public or non-public information; the basis of current research or teachings; or part of an unpublished book; or professional services usually performed for a charge. To the contrary, the media is rife with stories about volunteers briefing politicians and candidates to help them prepare a campaign, or to better understand current issues in topics as far flung as: foreign policy; climate change; international trade; tax policy; or health policy. For example, on November 12, 2012, the New York Times published a story, "Academic Dream Team Helped Obama's Effort", indicating the team included Dr. Craig Fox, a psychologist; Susan Fiske of Princeton University Samuel Popkin of the University of California, San Diego; Robert Cialdini, a professor emeritus at Arizona State University; Richard Thaler, a professor at the University of

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Chicago; and Michael Morris, a psychologist at Columbia. The headline on the July 6, 2015, Business Insider publication of an AP story was, "Hillary Clinton has consulted so many policy experts, her campaign has lost count". While on April 6, 2014 the Washington Post published, "In the 'credentials caucus,' GOP's 2016 hopefuls study policy and seek advisers", indicating that Governor Christie has consulted former secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Condoleezza Rice, as well as Council on Foreign Relations President Richard N. Haass. Further, it reported that Senator Rubio regularly consults with Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute and columnist James Pethokoukis, while Senator Paul has received policy advice from Bill Gates and PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel. In a February 1, 2015 article, The Wall Street Journal reported, "In December, Mrs. Clinton presided over a meeting at a midtown Manhattan hotel that focused on middle-class Americans feeling pinched by slow wage growth. Among those who attended: Mr. Volcker, the architect of the "Volcker Rule," a regulatory measure barring banks from making risky bets with their own money; Jonathan Cowan, co-founder of the centrist think tank Third Way, which has been critical of some of the

³ Carey, Benedict. "Academic 'Dream Team' Helped Obama's Effort." The New York Times. 12 November 2012. Web. 2 July 2015. < http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/health/dream-team-of-behavioral-scientists-advised-obama-campaign.html>.

Lerer, Lisa. "Hillary Clinton has consulted so many policy experts, her campaign has lost count." Business Insider. 6 July 2015. Web. 2 July 2015. http://www.businessinsider.com/hillary-clinton-has-a-luxury-few-candidates-enjoy-2015-7.

Rucker, Philip and Costa, Robert. "In the 'credentials caucus,' GOP's 2016 hopefuls study policy and seek advisers." The Washington Post. 6 April 2014. Web. 2 July 2015. http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/in-the-credentials-caucus-gops-2016-hopefuls-study-policy-and-seek-advisers/2014/04/06/cc97315e-bb48-11e3-9a05-c739f29ccb08 story.html>.

[°] Id.

Nicholas, Peter. "Clinton Consults to Define Economic Pitch." The Wall Street Journal. 1 February 2015. Web. 2 July 2015. http://www.wsj.com/articles/clinton-consults-experts-to-define-economic-pitch-1422837490.

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populist rhetoric coming from the Democrats' liberal wing; and Alan Blinder, a Princeton professor and former Fed vice chairman and economics adviser to Mr. Clinton."

Advisory Opinion 1980-42 (Haddon) noted, "the term 'contribution' does not include the value of services provided without compensation by any individual who volunteers on behalf of a candidate." The Opinion went on to hold that the voluntary services of a professional entertainer was not a contribution and noted prior opinions to the same effect involving entertainers and artists. Advisory Opinion 2012-16 (King, Pierce, Atwood LLP) reiterated that a law firm's partners, associates, and other employees, individually, may volunteer time in the form of legal or other services without providing a contribution. Simply put, the voluntary sharing of information, talent, or expertise with candidates has a long and storied tradition in America; a tradition that is critical to educating leaders and potential leaders, and reflects at least an individual's right to volunteer as a form of expression. To view such activity as enforceable violations of the Campaign Finance Law would turn every presidential candidate, and many of America's smartest and most revered thought leaders, attorneys and entertainers into violators of FECA.

The Book

Mr. Schweizer has a contract with HarperCollins to write and promote the Book, Clinton Cash. The contract recognizes Mr. Schweizer's copyright rights to the material and commits him

⁸ Id.

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to cooperate with HarperCollins in its role as the party responsible for the publication and promotion of the Book. Exhibit 1. As reported in the New York Times on March 23, 2015, the Times had an agreement with HarperCollins that gave it access to the Book well before its publication so that the Times could do a story building on a chapter in the Book, which would be researched, written and published with no conditions regarding what would be written or when it would be published. It was also noted that the Times did not pay anything for said access. 10 HarperCollins had already reached apparently similar agreements with the Washington Post and Fox News, in which all three news outlets had been provided proofs of the Book as it neared completion, well before the meetings with the Senators, and were given "exclusives" to write about it, pursue their own investigations of the material in the Book, and, of course, to report whatever they saw fit. 11 Moreover, several other news organizations received briefings prior to publication, and apparently several entities and individuals obtained the Book, or significant portions of it well before the publication date. 12 The New York Times story referenced above was published on April 23, 2015, thereby making public the Book's claims regarding Mrs. Clinton and Russian uranium dealing, buttressed by the Times' own investigative reporting.¹³ Interestingly, on April 19, 2015, Amy Chozick of the New York Times published a story about

Sullivan, Margaret. "An 'Exclusive' Arrangement on a Clinton Book, and Many Questions." The New York Times. 23 April 2015. Web. 2 July 2015. < http://publiceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/04/23/an-exclusive-arrangement-on-a-clinton-book-and-many-questions/? r=0>.

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ ld. ¹² ld.

¹³ ld.

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the Book which she had apparently obtained independently.¹⁴ Thus, weeks before the publication date of the Book, media outlets were reporting on the contents of the Book making its substance fodder for public discourse. The above demonstrates that in ways large and small, purposeful and not, much of the content of the allegations in the Book was put into the public sphere before the actual publication of the Book, thereby further undermining the notion that any information shared with Senator Paul prior to the publication date could be a campaign contribution valued at thousands of dollars.

In Citizens United v. FEC, 558 U.S. 310, 349 (2010), the Supreme Court opined that it would be troubling if the media exception to the Federal Election Law contribution rules was not applicable to the publication of books. The Explanation and Justification for the Regulations on Internet Communications, at 71 Fed. Reg. 8589, 18608-09 (April 12, 2006), noted, "The Commission is also clarifying that the media exemption protects news stories, commentaries, and editorials no matter in what medium they are published." It goes on to explain, "As the Supreme Court noted, 'It is not the intent of Congress in [FECA]***to limit or burden in any way the First Amendment freedoms of the press and association. Thus, the exclusion assures the unfettered right of newspapers, TV networks, and other media to cover and comment on political campaigns.' Massachusetts Citizens for Life, 479 U.S. at 250 (citing H.R. Rep. No. 93-129 at 4

Chozick, Amy. "New Book, 'Clinton Cash,' Questions Foreign Donations to Foundation." The New York Times. 19 April 2015. Web. 2 July 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/20/us/politics/new-book-clinton-cash-questions-foreign-donations-to-foundation.html.

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(1979)" And, recently, in Advisory Opinion 2008-14 (Melothe Inc.) at 3, the Commission stated: "Commission has not limited the press exemption to traditional news outlets, but rather has applied it to 'news stories, commentaries, and editorials, no matter in what medium they are published."

Advisory Opinion 2014-06 (Ryan) goes into great detail about the sale and promotion of a book written by Congressman and candidate Paul Ryan. Rather than directly state that the publication of a book is subject to the media exception, the Commission determined that a corporation's (the publisher's) bona fide commercial activity is neither "for the purpose of influencing any election for federal office" or "in connections with any election" and thus is not a contribution or otherwise subject to regulation under the Act." It further noted that the publisher for Ryan's book, like HarperCollins, is a long established and prominent publisher of a wide variety of different types of books, engaged in genuine commercial activity on their face. Interestingly, in a concurring statement to that Opinion, signed by three of the FEC Commissioners, they stated, "The publication of books is a centuries-old medium for disseminating political and social commentary. The Supreme Court long has recognized that book publishers and books fall squarely within the Free Press Clause of the First Amendment; the constitutional guarantee of freedom of the press embraces the circulation of books as well as their publication." (Bantam Books, Inc. v. Sullivan, 372 U.S. 58, 64 n.6 (1963) (citing Lovell v. Griffin, 303 U.S. 444, 452 (1938)) Moreover, it is well established that promotional activities

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are exempt when performed in support of exempt media publications. See for example Advisory Opinion 2010-08 (Citizens United); Advisory Opinion 2014-06 (Ryan); and Advisory Opinion 2011-11 (Colbert).

If Mr. Schweizer's visit to Senator Paul is looked at in the context of promoting the Book, it must be recognized as being within the media exception, and/or permissible commercial activity, for which no payment was received by Mr. Schweitzer, nor contribution given to Mr. Paul.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we suggest the Commission should fully recognize Mr. Schweizer's visit to Senator Paul was not a campaign contribution but was simply a citizen doing his civic duty by sharing information with an appropriate government official about possible malfeasance by a former official. And, that as a matter of law there could be no campaign contribution to a candidate, when such person was neither a candidate nor engaged with an authorized campaign committee. Failing that, should you find Senator Paul was a candidate, and then you must consider Mr. Schweizer's visit to him and his sharing information as garden variety voluntary assistance to a candidate, which would not constitute a campaign contribution, nor would the uncompensated promotion of a published book.

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For the foregoing reasons, the Commission should take no further action against Peter Schweizer and should forthwith dismiss the Complaint which has no basis in law or in fact.

Sincerely,

Laurence A. Levy

EXHIBIT 2

FEC FORM 2

STATEMENT OF CANDIDACY

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(b) Address (number and street) PO BOX 77681		.—							
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FEC Form 1 (Revised 02/2008)	Page 2
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EXHIBIT 3

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FEC FORM 2 STATEMENT OF CANDIDACY RECEIVED FEC MAIL CENTER

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2. DATE 04"	13" (2015")		
3. FEC IDENTIFICATION	N NUMBER C		
4. IS THIS STATEMENT	NEW (N) OR	AMENDED (A	A)
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NOTE: Submission of false, e	Any CHANGE IN INFORMATS		ning this Statement to the penalties of 2 U.S.C. §437 ED WITHIN 10 DAYS.
Office Use Only		For further informati Federal Election Com Toll Fee 800-424-953 Local 202-884-1100	nmission PEC PORMI

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TYPE OF COMMITTEE Candidate Committee: (a)
(a) X This committee is a principal campaign committee. (Complete the candidate Information below.) (b) This committee is an authorized committee, and is NOT a principal campaign committee. (Complete the candidate Information below.) Name of Candidate Party Affitation (c) This committee supports/opposes only one candidate, and is NOT an authorized committee. Party Committee: (d) This committee is a (National, State or subordinate) committee of the Republican, etc.) Party Political Action Committee (PAC):
This committee is an authorized committee, and is NOT a principal campaign committee. (Complete the candidate information below.) Name of Candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton Candidate Party Affitation Candidate Dem Sought: House Senate President District (c) This committee supports/opposes only one candidate, and is NOT an authorized committee. Name of Candidate (National, State or subordinate) committee of the Republican, etc.) Party Committee is a consultational committee of the Republican, etc.) Party Political Action Committees (PAC):
Information below.) Name of Candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton Candidate Party Affitation Dem Sought: House Senate President District (c) This committee supports/opposes only one candidate, and is NOT an authorized committee. Name of Candidate Party Committee: (National, State or subordinate) committee of the Republican, etc.) Party Committee is a Candidate or subordinate of the Republican, etc.) Party Committee (PAC):
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(e) This committee is a separate segregated lund. (identify connected organization on line 6.) its connected organization it
Corporation Corporation w/o Capital Stock Labor Organization
Membership Organization Trade Association Cooperables
In addition, this committee is a Lobbyist/Registrant PAC.
(f) This committee supports/opposes more than one Federal candidate, and is NOT a separate segragated fund or par committee, (i.e., nonconnected committee)
In addition, this committee is a Lobbyist/Registrant PAC.
In addition, this committee is a Leadership PAC. (Identity sponsor on line 6.)
Joint Fundraising Representative:
(g) This committee collects contributions, pays fundrateing expenses and disburses net proceeds for two or more political committees/organizations, at least one of which is an authorized committee of a federal candidate.
(h) This committee collects contributions, pays fundraising expenses and disburses net proceeds for two or more political committees/organizations, none of which is an authorized committee of a federal candidate.
Committees Participating in Joint Fundraiser
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Date of Receipt Received from Senate Public Records Office	Received from Senate Public Records Office	
Date of Receipt Received from Electronic Filing Office	Received from Electronic Filing Office	Date of Receipt
Other (Specify):	Other (Specify):	Date of Receipt or Postmarked
4/13/15		4/13/15
PREPARER DATE PREPARED (3/2015)		UATE PREPARED